

Message Text

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53

ACTION OPR-02

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00

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SCS-03 SCA-01 TRSE-00 SCCT-01 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SAM-01 /097 W

----- 013823

O R 011550Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5063

DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USCINCEUR

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STUTTGART FOR ELG

DEPT FOR WLG

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PGOV, LE, PLO

SUBJECT: ROUGH SLEDDING ANTICIPATED DESPITE FORMATION OF CABINET

REFS: A. BEIRUT 8274; B. BEIRUT 8317

1. DESPITE ANNOUNCEMENT NIGHT JUNE 30 THAT SIX-MAN CABINET HAD BEEN CHOSEN, COUNTRY IN GENERAL AND BEIRUT IN PARTICULAR SUFFERED THROUGH ANOTHER NIGHT (JUNE 30/JULY 1) AS BAD AS ANY IN RECENT MEMORY. RESIDENTS OF RAS BEIRUT HEARD SOUNDS OF AUTOMATIC WEAPONS FIRE AND EXPLOSIONS THROUGHOUT NIGHT AND LEBANESE ARMY SOURCE TOLD DATT MORNING JULY 1 THAT NOT MORE THAN ONE PERCENT OF FIRING WAS AUDIBLE IN RAS BEIRUT. MAIN AREAS OF CONFLICT WERE ONCE AGAIN SHIAH, AIN RUMANNEH AND QUARANTINA, AS WELL AS SINN AL FIL AND ASRAFIYEH, BUT ROVING BANDS ENGAGED ARMED RESIDENTS IN MANY OTHER PARTS OF TOWN. NIGHT CRAWLERS AND OTHER LOCAL LOW-LIFE AGAIN MADE THEIR ROUNDS PLANTING EXPLOSIVES ALL OVER BEIRUT. BOMB EXPLODED IN FRONT OF SOVIET EMBASSY CHANCERY AND ANOTHER INGROUND FLOOR COMMERCIAL OFFICE OF BUILDING IN WHICH MARINE SECURITY GUARD DETACHMENT IS HOUSED, BUT NO RPT NO CASUAL-TIES RESULTED FROM EITHER INCIDENT. IN TRIPOLI ALSO, MORE THAN 25 RPT 25 EXPLOSIONS WERE HEARD DURING HOURS DARKNESS. ZAHLE WAS REPORTED SCENE OF CLASHES BETWEEN RIVAL FACTIONS AND BAALBEK, SIDON, TYRE, AND NABATIYEH ARE QUITE TENSE. FIRING IN BEIRUT ITSELF WAS SO HEAVY THAT FIRE ENGINES WERE UNABLE TO REACH SEVERAL LARGE FIRES AND AMBULANCES WERE FORCED TO GIVE UP ATTEMPTS TO EVACUATE WOUNDED. CASUALTIES SINCE AFTERNOON JUNE 30 MAY RUN AS HIGH AS 100 DEAD AND SEVERAL HUNDRED WOUNDED.

2. AS OF 1200Z JULY 1, REPORTS OF FIRING IN VARIOUS NEIGHBORHOODS IN BEIRUT CONTINUE TO BE RECEIVED AND EXPLOSIONS CAN OCCASIONALLY BE HEARD FORUM EMBASSY. DISTRIBUTION OF PORTFOLIOS TO NEW CABINET MEMBERS (REF B) IS NOT RPT NOT EXPECTED BY MOST OBSERVERS TO SAVE CAPITAL FROM FURTHER LONG AND BLOODY NIGHT. BY ALL ACCOUNTS, COMBATANTS OF VARIOUS POLITICAL PER-
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SUASIONS ARE BUSILY ENGAGED IN PREPARATIONS FOR NIGHT'S EVENTS AND PHALANGISTS IN ASHRAFIYEH ARE REPORTEDLY WARNING RESIDENTS TO SLEEP IN BASEMENTS TONIGHT.

3. THERE IS NO DEARTH OF ARMED ELEMENTS ABROAD WHO ARE UNWILLING TO CONSIDER NEW CABINET TO BE SOLUTION TO CRISIS. MANY OF JUMBLATT'S UPPORTERS AND ASSORTED LEFTIST AND "PROGRESSIVE" BANDS ARE PROBABLY MORE ANGERED THAN SOOTHED BY

"RIGHT-WING" CHARACTER OF GOVT. THESE ELEMENTS, WITH THEIR "REJECTIONIST" PALESTINIAN ALLIES, CAN ALMOST CERTAINLY BE RELIED UPON TO MAKE CONCERTED EFFORT TO KEEP CLASHES ALIVE. WE HAVE ON SECOND-HAND REPORT, SOURCED TO LEBANESE SECURITY, OF ALLEGED PLANS BY "REJECTION" FRONT, SPEARHEADED BY HABBASH'S PFLP, TO HEAT UP SITUATION TO POINT WHERE LEBANESE ARMY INTERVENTION IS NECESSARY. OBJECTIVE OF PLAN IS TO CONFRONT ARMY DIRECTLY WITH HOPE OF DRAWING "MODERATE" PLO LEADERSHIP INTO FULL-SCALE CONFRONTATION WITH GOL. THERE ARE SOME INDICATIONS THAT INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF FATAH AND SA'IQA HAVE BEEN PARTICIPATING RECENTLY IN CLASHES, BUT NEITHER ORGANIZATION HAS INTERVENED IN UNIT STRENGTH. MANY SOURCES, INCLUDING SOME PAPERS, CLAIM THAT SYRIAN FONMIN KHADDAM (WHO HAS APPARENTLY RETURNED TO DAMASCUS) PHONED ZUHAIR MOHSEN FROM PRESIDENTIAL PALACE IN BAABDA TO COMPLAIN ANGIRLY OF ROCKET WHICH FELL CLOSE KHADDAM AND TO DIRECT THAT MOHSEN BEND EVERY EFFORT TO COOL SITUATION. WE NOTE UPI REPORT THIS MORNING QUOTING PALESTINIAN SPOKESMAN AS ADMITTING "SOME TROUBLE" RECENTLY WITHIN TEL ZAATAR CAMP. IT COULD WELL BE THAT THIS INTERNAL DISTURBANCE REFLECTED ACTION BY FATAH AND SA'IQA (WHICH WE HAVE PREVIOUSLY REPORTED ASSUMED CONTROL OF CAMP) TO FORESTALL INTERVENTION OF PFLP ELEMENTS WHICH REMAIN IN TEL ZAATAR.

4. WE DOUBT AS WELL THAT PHALANGE RANK AND FILE FULLY RECONCILED TO COMPROMISE REPRESENTED BY NEW CABINET. DURING JUNE 30 MEETING OF PHALANGE POLITBURO (REFTEL A), GEMAYEL APPARENTLY FACED ANGRY COLLEAGUES WHO ARGUED THAT PHALANGE HAD MADE THE SACRIFICES BUT CHAMOUN WAS GATHERING THE FURITS. IT NOT CLEAR HOW WIDESPREAD SUCH SENTIMENTS ARE BUT WE BELIEVE IT PROBABLE THAT MANY PHALANGE SUPPORTERS WILLING (EVEN EAGER) TO FIGHT ON. ALL INGREDIENTS FOR FURTHER TROUBLES THEREFORE CONTINUE TO BE PRESENT.

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5. ON POLITICAL FRONT, SHIITE IMAM MUSA SADR CONTINUES HIS HUNGER STRIKE IN AMILIYEH MOSQUE. HIS PERSONAL SECRETARY TOLD EMBOFF JULY 1 THAT IMAM'S HEALTH IS GOOD BUT THAT HE WOULD CONTINUE FAST UNTIL NEW CABINET INSTALLED AND ITS PROGRAM ANNOUNCED. IMAM HAS NO RPT NO DIFFICULTY WITH PERSONALTIES IN CABINET BUT WILL SEEK DETERMINE WHEAT CABINET PROPOSES TO DO ABOUT LEBANON'S PRESSING PROBLEMS BEFORE ENDING HIS TRIKE OR DECIDING WHAT FURTHER ACTION SITUATION MIGHT REQUIRE. MEANWHILE, HIS ARMED SUPPORTERS CONTINUE ACTIVE IN BEKKA VALLEY AND SOUTH LEBANON AND WE HAVE REPORT THAT SOME ELEMENTS WERE PARTICIPANTS IN LAST NIGHT'S CLASHES. IN PRESENT CONFUSED SITUATION, HOWEVER, WE CANNOT DETERMINE FOR OR AGAINST WHOM THEY MIGHT HAVE BEEN FIGHTING.

6. FOLLOWING OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEW CABINET JULY 1, WE BEGAN HEARING RUMOR THAT ONE OF PREMIER AND MINDEF KARAME'S FIRST ACTIONS WILL BE TO OUST GEN GHANEM, CONTROVERSIAL COMMANDER OF LEBANESE ARMY. SUCH ACTION WOULD BE POPULAR IN SOME MOSLEM QUARTERS AND WITH MOST OF ARMY OFFICER CORPS BUT COULD ANTAGONIZE CERTAIN CHRISTIAN ELEMENTS. THERE IS SOME SPECULATION THAT KARAME, BY ASSUMING DEFENSE PRT-FOLIO AND REPLACING GHANEM MIGHT BE MANEUVERING TO DEFUSE MOSLEM OPPOSITION TO ARMY INTERVENTION TO IMPROVE SECURITY SITUATION, IF THIS BECOMES NECESSARY. WE BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT KARAME, WHO HAS REPUTATION FOR STEEL NERVES, RECOGNIZES SENSITIVITIES REGARDING ROLE FOR ARMY, PARTICULARLY ON PART OF PALESTINIANS, AND WOULD MOVE WITH GREAT DELIBERATION ON THIS MATTER.

6. SO FAR AS WE CAN DETERMINE, AMCITS REMAIN SAFE. SUS-TAINED ANXIETY AND WIDENING AREA OF TERRORIST ACTIVITIES BEGINNING TO HAVE IMPACT ON BOTH LDBANESE AND FOREIGN RESIDENTS. ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY AS WELL AS NORMAL MOVEMENT IS AT STANDSTILL AS LEBANESE AUTHORITIES AGAIN WANR THAT ROADS ARE NOT RPT NOT SECURE. MANY LEBANESE RESIDENTS HAVE PACKED UP FOR MOUNTAINS AND WE HAVE EVEN HEARD OF INSTANCES OF LEBANESE FROM THE SOUTH WHO SOUGHT REFUGE IN BEIRUT FROM ISRAELI RETALIATION THERE RETURNING TO THEIR HOME VILLAGES. BAHRAIN AND KUWAIT ARE APPARENTLY EVACUATING THEIR NATIONALS AND FOREIGN RESIDENTS OF MANY
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OTHER NATIONALITIES ARE JOINING EXODUS. SOME AMCIT RESIDENTS FROM AREAS OF CLASHES AND OTHER INCIDENTS ARE EITHER MOVING INTO MAJOR HOTELS OR SENDING THEIR DEPENDENTS OUT OF COUNTRY. SEVERAL US FIRMS REPRESENTED HERE HAVE PLANS FOR RELOCATING THEIR OFFICES OR PERSONNEL TEMPORARILY. BECHTEL, WHICH MOVED OUTLYING PERSONNEL TO HOTELS EARLY IN CRISIS, NOW MOVING AT LEAST DEPENDENTS OUT OF LEBANON AND WE HAVE UNCONFIRMED REPORT BARIOD TAKING SIMILAR ACTION. INGERSOLL-RAND TRANSFERRING EMPLOYEES TO ATHENS AND TEHRAN, BUT EMPHASIZES DECISION TAKEN FOR "OPERATIONAL" REASONS (IE BECAUSE EMPLOYEES UNABLE CONDUCT BUSINESS IN BEIRUT FOR IIME BEING). IRST NATIONAL CITY BANK PLANS MOVE DEPENDENTS AND TRAINEES TO ATHENS JULY 3, BUT IS NOT RPT NOT TRANSFERRING REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS. NUMBER OF OTHER PRIVATE AMCITS HAVE ALSO DEPARTED, PROBABLY TO AWAIT CLARIFICATION OF SITUATION.

7. EMBASSY CONTINUES ADVISE OFFICIAL AND UNOFFICIAL AMCITS TO REMAIN IN HOMES AND RESTRICT MOVEMENTS TO ABSOLUTE MINIMUM. IN FACE OF RUMORS REGARDING EVACUATION, WE ARE INFORMING INQUIRIES THAT EMBASSY HAS NOT RPT NOT TAKEN DECISION TO ORDER EVACUATION. UNABLE REACH AIRPORT BY PHONE OR RADIO BUT AIR TRAFFIC APPEARS TO BE OPERATING NEAR NORMAL.

SEVERAL FLIGHTS CANCELLED, PARTICULARLY AT NIGHT, BUT SEATS
PLENTIFUL.
GODLEY

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NNN

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